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### **Rapid Response Team activated to aid Sweetheart Cup employees**

SPRINGFIELD -- The State Rapid Response Team has been activated to help 200 workers that are scheduled for layoffs later this year by the Sweetheart Cup Company of Springfield.

The Rapid Response Team, composed of representatives from the Department of Economic Development's Division of Workforce Development (DWD), the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations, and the Local Missouri Career Center, responds to the needs of workers who have lost their jobs by providing special training and re-employment services.

Joseph L. Driskill, director of the Missouri Department of Economic Development, has directed DWD to assist Sweetheart Cup employees by offering Missouri Career Center services.

"When layoffs occur, it is important that Missourians know where they can turn for assistance," said Driskill. "I encourage these individuals to take advantage of the free services offered through the local Missouri Career Centers to help them find new employment opportunities."

The Rapid Response Team and the local Missouri Career Center will provide immediate services to workers needing assistance, including assessment and testing, career counseling and resume writing, interviewing skills, job search methods, on-the-job training and tuition assistance for vocational training or education.

Representatives from DWD and the Full Employment Council are working with the company to ensure that workers have access to these free services. Meetings will be held with workers on two days next week. Meetings will be held on November 8 at 7 a.m., 2 p.m., and 3 p.m. and on November 9 at 7 a.m.

Sweetheart Cup makes paper and plastic cups, plates and food containers. Company officials attributed the layoffs to the consolidation of some of its operation from Springfield with its headquarters in Owings Mills, MD.

Employers interested in hiring Sweetheart workers can call **1-800-877-8698**.

Since 1983 -- when Missouri's dislocated worker program was established -- more than 100,000 dislocated workers have participated in the program. Approximately 80 percent of the people assisted by the program find new employment.

Laid-off workers interested in the training and re-employment services offered through the Rapid Response Team can contact Alice Simpson with the Missouri Career Center in Springfield at (417) 887-4343.